

Friends of St. Patrick 75th Anniversary Banquet
Knights of Columbus Hall Seattle, Washington
March 15, 2015 (as prepared)

First off, I'd like to congratulate the Seattle Friends of St. Patrick for 75 years of Irish food, drink and keeping Irish traditions alive and well in the state of Washington. I would like to thank Consul John Keane for his continuous representation of Ireland through the Irish Heritage Club. I'd also like to give special recognition to Irishman Mayor Ed Murray for joining us this evening.

Friends of St. Patrick has made its mark in Seattle since the club's formation in 1941. Tonight the proceeds of this banquet will be going back to our communities through charity- towards a Seattle University scholarship, and to the Seattle Galway Sister City Association. In fact, Washington has three sister-city relationships with Ireland. Besides Galway and Seattle, Washington has sister cities between Spokane and Limerick, and between Everett and Sligo (Slygo), Ireland.

Tonight we recognize the many cultural, educational and trading possibilities our Irish-Americans have brought to the beautiful Pacific Northwest. We also recognize the many noteworthy people of Irish descent who call Washington their home (in addition to Mayor Murray). Irish were among the first European immigrants to settle in our state, way back as early as the 1840s. About a decade ago it was estimated that as many as 11 percent of all Washingtonians had at least a wee bit of the Irish blood in them.

Thank you to all of our Irish-Americans for your contributions to our great state and I wish you all a happy St. Patrick's Day. I know you're going to have a whale of a time! (*popular Irish expression*).